
From: Peter Osborne – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Simon Jones – Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 5 May 2026

Subject: A226 Galley Hill Road

Decision no: 26/00019

Key Decision: Yes – Scheme affects more than two Electoral Divisions; scheme involves expenditure of greater than £1m

Classification: Report unrestricted;
Appendix B Exempt – NOT FOR PUBLICATION
Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 refers.

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Cllr Thomas Mallon – Swanscombe and Greenhithe
Cllr Matthew Fraser Moat – Northfleet and Gravesend West
Cllr Sharon Roots – Northfleet and Gravesend West

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary:

On 10 April 2023 the A226 Galley Hill suffered a significant collapse and has remained closed since. KCC has taken action under existing statutory powers to secure the site, protect public safety and complete the investigations and feasibility work required to identify a viable solution.

As the scheme moves beyond initial investigations, formal governance approval is now required to provide appropriate oversight, authorise funding and ensure continued compliance.

The proposed decision seeks approval to progress the scheme up to and including detailed design stage, in parallel with pursuing external funding opportunities and recovery of costs from parties found liable, so that KCC maintains momentum and is well placed to secure funding when opportunities arise.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider, endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The A226 Galley Hill is a strategically important route linking Dartford, Gravesham and Ebbsfleet. On 10 April 2023, a section of the chalk spine between Swanscombe High Street and Snowden Hill, Northfleet collapsed causing significant highway and utility infrastructure damage.
- 1.2 Restoration of the route is vital for supporting local communities, businesses, and planned growth within Ebbsfleet Garden City, as well as the reinstatement of the Fastrack bus network. As part of the Kent Resilient Network, the route is important for the efficient management of highway network flows.

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 Unlike planned infrastructure schemes, no specific capital funding has been identified to deliver reinstatement works arising from this type of unplanned event.
- 2.2 The scale of the collapse means that the costs cannot be met from existing highways maintenance budgets. The cliff structure below the road is not a KCC owned asset, and KCC's responsibility is limited to the carriageway construction.
- 2.3 It is proposed to progress the scheme to detailed design stage. The forward funding protects KCC's position with the aim of avoiding cost increases by deferring the design phase and ensures KCC are best placed to develop a robust business case to support any appropriate government funding, such as the Structures Fund and/or ongoing legal activity.
- 2.4 The Strategic Statement prioritises improving connectivity and network resilience. The A226 Galley Hill is identified in Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) as a key part of the local road network, with its restoration recognised as essential to reducing congestion, improving journey time reliability, and enabling the return of bus and Fastrack services along this corridor.
- 2.5 Restoring the route directly contributes to the Council's objectives to improve transport reliability, reduce pressure on the wider network, and enhance sustainable travel options.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Galley Hill section of the A226 sits over a raised linear chalk spine which was formed as a result of historical chalk quarrying in the 19th century where excavation was carried out on both the north and south sides of the road alignment.

3.2 A section of this chalk spine collapsed (Figure 1) to the north of Galley Hill, triggering a significant landslide that resulted in the loss of part of the carriageway and footway and caused damage to buried utility infrastructure serving the local area.



Figure 1: Aerial View of site vicinity; Image source Google Maps 2024

- 3.3 As a result, the A226 Galley Hill has remained closed since April 2023.
- 3.4 KCC as the local highway authority, has led the response to the collapse, working with specialist consultants to undertake investigations and develop options to reinstate the route.
- 3.5 The ongoing closure of the A226 Galley Hill continues to have a significant impact on the surrounding highway network and the communities of Swanscombe and Northfleet.
- 3.6 The closure has disrupted public transport services, including the Fastrack bus network, and has wider implications for the delivery of planned housing and employment growth in Ebbsfleet and Northfleet.
- 3.7 Restoration of the route is therefore important to maintaining network resilience, supporting sustainable transport.
- 3.8 Since the collapse, KCC has actively pursued external funding opportunities including engagement with the Department for Transport.
- 3.9 This paper recommends providing approval to proceed and progress the scheme development up to and including the detailed design stage. Maintaining momentum is essential to ensure that KCC remains well-placed to respond quickly and effectively to any suitable funding opportunities, such as the Structures Fund.

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

4.1 Other options considered are as follows:

4.1.1 Option 2 – Completely pause all project development work until funding is secured. This option has the following significant drawbacks. KCC would be disadvantaged against other funding bids as our existing design is not developed enough to secure funding through the Department for Transport or other national funding streams.

4.1.2 Option 3 – Completely stop the scheme to reinstate the A226 Galley Hill. This is not considered a viable. Separate legal advice concluded that stopping up of this route is not an option for KCC. This option would also attract abortive costs.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 At present, no capital funding has been identified to deliver the reinstatement works.

5.2 Highway authorities do not hold insurance for the failure of highway structures, and the scale and unprecedented nature of the collapse means that the costs cannot be met from existing asset management or highways maintenance budgets. As previously noted, the cliff structure itself is not within Council ownership.

5.3 There is no existing budget line for the A226 Galley Hill scheme, although it is featured as a risk in the latest budget book.

5.4 To date, KCC have spent £1.186m. A breakdown of this expenditure is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Cost	
Operational costs to make the highway safe	£660k
Legal Costs	£201k
Scheme Development	£325k
Total expenditure	£1.186m

5.5 Funding to date has been utilised from existing revenue budgets as well as KCC reserves.

5.6 The total restoration scheme is initially considered to be in the region of £50 million.

5.7 Table 2 identifies the funding required to complete the preliminary and detailed design stages. The plan remains to complete this work by Autumn 2026.

Table 2

Cost	
Structural and geotechnical preliminary design	£214k
Ecology surveys	£135k
Initial Planning	£11.5k
Business case	£190.5k
Total preliminary design	£490k
Detailed design (excluding land acquisition)	£1,104,000
Detailed design survey work	£1,005,000
Total detailed design	£2,109,000

- 5.8 A bid for internal KCC funds for £490k has been submitted and an outcome is expected prior to this proposed decision. Should this bid be unsuccessful and further funding cannot be identified, the scheme will cease until such time that funding becomes available.
- 5.9 In order to deliver the full reconstruction, KCC is continuing to explore potential external funding opportunities in parallel with considering legal remedies. The Structures Fund was formally launched by the Department for Transport on 15 April 2026. The Structures Fund will provide grant funding to support the capital costs of repairing or replacing local highway structures, specifically including collapsed cliffs. KCC are reviewing the eligibility of the scheme and the potential to submit a strong and well-prepared bid to secure funding to reopen this vital stretch of road.
- 5.10 Funding for the detailed design is intended to be identified through external funding, such as the Structures Fund. Again, should this bid be unsuccessful and further funding cannot be identified, the scheme will not progress with detailed design until such time that funding becomes available.
- 5.11 Although KCC is not responsible for the cliff structure, the intention of the proposed decision is to continue scheme development to maintain momentum and be able to respond quickly to funding opportunities such as the Structures Fund. It is also noted that deferring further investigative and design work will only increase the final scheme costs as prolonged exposure of the cliff may cause further damage and more funding will need to be found to continually mitigate the impacts on surrounding roads.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The A226 Galley Hill is a highway maintainable at public expense, and KCC is the highway authority for the route. As such, KCC is subject to the section 41 duty under the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway and keep it reasonably safe for ordinary use.
- 6.2 The collapse of the carriageway and footway in April 2023 meant that the A226 was no longer reasonably passable without danger requiring the authority to act to prevent danger to highway users.
- 6.3 Although KCC are responsible for the highway on the cliff spine, the Council does not own the chalk cliff supporting the road.

6.4 Given the complexities around ownership of the spine and the reasons behind the collapse, legal support and advice has been ongoing since April 2023. Further information is provided in Appendix B.

7. Equalities implications

7.1 The current EQIA Assessment is included as Appendix C. The EQIA was most recently updated in March 2026 and identifies that individuals who fall within the Age, Disability, Pregnancy & Maternity, and Carer Responsibility groups have faced negative impacts following the closure of the route and may face minor, short-term negative impacts during the construction.

7.2 However, these groups are expected to experience significant long-term benefits from the scheme and no negative long terms impacts have been identified.

8. Data Protection Implications

8.1 A DPIA is not required for this decision or scheme. There are no foreseen data protection implications.

9. Other corporate implications

9.1 It is not considered that this decision will have further corporate implications to other Directorates within KCC.

10. Governance

10.1 Under the officer scheme of delegation, should the recommended decision be progressed, the Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport will make decisions for the ongoing delivery of the scheme up to and including detailed design stage, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. The scheme will return to the Cabinet Committee for further decision recommendations at detailed design stage and to accept any identified funding for the scheme construction.

11. Conclusions

11.1 There is a continuing need to address the highway and utility infrastructure damage caused by the collapse of A226 Galley Hill on 10 April 2023.

11.2 KCC has taken action under existing statutory powers to secure the site, protect public safety and complete the investigations and feasibility work required to identify a viable solution.

11.3 As the scheme moves beyond initial investigations, formal governance approval is now required to provide appropriate oversight, authorise funding and ensure continued compliance.

11.4 The proposed decision seeks approval to progress the scheme up to detailed design stage, in parallel with pursuing external funding opportunities and

recovery of costs from parties found liable, so that KCC maintains momentum and is well placed to secure funding when opportunities arise.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider, endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport in relation to the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

10. Background Documents and Appendices

- 10.1 Appendix A – PROD
- 10.2 Appendix B – CONFIDENTIAL Appendix
- 10.3 Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

11. Contact details

Report Author: Toby Howe Job title: Senior Highway Manager Telephone number: 03000 410219 Email: toby.howe@kent.gov.uk	Director: Andrew Loosemore Job title: Interim Director of Highways and Transport Telephone number: 03000 411652 Email: andrew.loosemore@kent.gov.uk
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